

****Approved****

The University of Southern Mississippi
Staff Council Minutes
May 7, 2002

1.0 Call to Order

President Sumrall called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

The following members were present: Rusty Anderson, Joan Brashears, Cindy Burnett, Cheryl Burnette, Kim Busche, Kalin Butirich, Melissa Carpenter, Shannon Davis, Carol Dunaway, Mike Giles, John Green, Lin Harper, John Hayman, Mary Ann Iverson, Robin Johnson, David Kinsey, Larry McMickle, Charlene McMillin, Kenton McNeese, Connie Morgan, Jessie Person, Pam Posey, Jan Roberts, Susan Sanders, CJ Sims, Arlin Steen, Mary Sumrall, Sam Williams, Trisha Wilbanks, and Ronnie Williamson.

2.0 Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted with an addition to old business under 6.2
– Vote for Staff Council Award.

3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Kathy Hayman by John Hayman, Polly Odom by Susan Sanders.

The following members were absent without representation: Bradley Bridges, Veda Spencer.

4.0 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March regular meeting were approved as printed.

The minutes of the April regular meeting were approved with minor grammatical corrections.

5.0 Officer's Reports

5.1 President's Report – Mary Sumrall

Our speaker for today, Dr. Shelby Thames, was unable to attend due to a conference call with the other presidents of the state institutions. At this time, it looks as if USM would need a 23 percent increase in tuition to cover all expenses. This is unrealistic, so we

need to be prepared for some cuts. Thanks to Pam Posey and Sam Williams, who assisted with the preparation of the presentation to the IHL Board regarding the presidential candidates. Their help in compiling the information within such a limited time frame made our presentation go very smoothly.

Monday, April 8, 2002, Cabinet

Much of the discussion pertained to a request from the Board Office for information to justify a tuition increase. The Board Office requested information on the specific outcomes if there is no tuition increase, description of cost-saving measures and cuts that USM implemented in FY 2002, and a detailed list of how additional tuition (3–10 percent) would be used. The Cabinet looked at figures provided by Dr. McFall and Dana Keith, Budget Officer. These figures included fixed

costs, which are increasing next year, such as health insurance, utilities, faculty and staff promotions, mandated 2 percent raises for faculty and staff, etc. Each vice president was asked to provide the numbers from his or her area with a projected 8.1 percent cut and no tuition increase. The Cabinet will meet on April 9 to finalize the report to submit to the IHL Board by April 12 to be discussed at the April board meeting. (I could not attend the April 9 meeting since I was involved with the presidential candidate interviews.)

Monday, April 8–Friday, April 12, 2002, Presidential Candidate Interviews

Words cannot describe adequately the week spent interviewing the three presidential candidates. Things were very hectic! My days began at 7:30 in the morning with a meeting of the Cabinet and the candidate, and ended at 9:00 at night with the campus advisory committee meeting with the next candidate. I could not have made it without the help of Pam Posey and Sam Williams in compiling the data received from the evaluation forms. We received 171 evaluations for Dr. Thames, 157 for Dr. Hickey, and 141 for Dr. Hart. The interviews were held each morning between 10:45–11:30. Pam, Sam, and I compiled data and typed the comments for Vrita Delaine and me to use in our presentations to the IHL Board at 2:00 each afternoon. The interaction with the IHL Board was very positive, and I truly felt they were listening to the staff. They commented several times how pleased they were with the participation of the staff in the process; of course they had expected the faculty to participate, but not the staff. We discussed things other than the presidential candidates. We were asked about staff

morale, staff salaries, and other similar issues. They are aware that salaries and deteriorating benefits are a major problem. I took the opportunity to talk about increasing workloads of staff and the effects of PeopleSoft implementation. Thank you for the questions you submitted for the interviews and the way you conducted yourselves during the process.

Monday, April 15, 2002, Cabinet

The Cabinet reviewed the report prepared by Dr. Linda McFall and her staff to submit to the IHL Board Office for discussion at the April board meeting regarding the effects of budget cuts with no tuition increase as well as budget cuts with various increases in tuition (3–10 percent). Much time was spent discussing the mandated 2 percent raises. I proposed that a 2 percent raise does not substantially help our lower-paid staff employees and used the figures I obtained from

Human Resources to support my arguments. Sixty-two percent of our staff makes less than \$25,000 each year, and almost 43 percent make less than \$20,000 per year. A few times in the past, if raise money was available, the lower paid staff was given a higher percentage raise. Dr. Lucas asked Dr. McFall to look at the pool of money for this mandated raise and see what assistance we could give lower paid staff. Any difference in our process would probably have to be approved by the Board, but we can't make an argument for any changes until we run the figures. The chief academic officers will be meeting this week to discuss how to assist those programs placed on probation after the recent academic program reviews; university missions; duplication of master's and doctoral programs; and faculty workloads.

Thursday, April 18, 2002, Board of Trustees Meeting

The meeting was fairly routine this month. However, there was much discussion on tuition increases. There seems to be strong support on the IHL Board not to approve a tuition increase this year. Dr. Magee spoke to the fact that Mississippi has the lowest per capita income in the nation, and he knows that a tuition increase will burden families which are already struggling to pay for a college education. Some members suggested that a survey might be conducted to determine the opinions among Mississippians regarding a tuition increase. The IHL Board decided to schedule a special meeting to deal only with budgets and tuition. That meeting will take place on May 6. Dr. Magee also brought up the issue of how to handle illegal questions being asked during the presidential selection process. The person

escorting the candidate to various meetings should address the issue when an illegal question is asked, and not put the candidate in the position of answering. Mr. Crawford, outgoing IHL Board President, passed the gavel to Mr. Bryce Griffis, who will now serve as President of the IHL Board. Dr. Claudia Limbert, new President of Mississippi University for Women, and Dr. Shelby Thames, new President of The University of Southern Mississippi, were introduced and welcomed. The IHL Board thanked Dr. Lucas for serving as president of The University of Southern Mississippi during the search for a new president. The Presidents' Council did not discuss time off for staff this summer. The other seven university presidents do not appear to be supportive of the idea.

Monday, April 22, 2002 Cabinet

The Cabinet looked at the responses from the other seven state universities to the IHL Board's request for information concerning the effects on each campus should there be no tuition increase and how the institutions would use the money from an additional tuition increase. Most of the universities answered as did USM: eliminating unfilled faculty and staff positions, cutting utility costs, cutting travel budgets, delaying purchases of equipment, and so on. Faculty workloads continue to be an issue with the IHL Board members. Dr. Andy Griffin has already looked at workloads for USM faculty, and though there are a few exceptions, our faculty usually teach nine hours a semester. The President has received the report of the ad hoc committee to review technology on campus. Copies will be made available to members of the Cabinet for review. Dr. Lucas commented on the thoroughness of the report. A press conference will be held today to announce a gift from the Asbury Foundation for an endowed chair in the School of Nursing. McCarty Hall will be dedicated on Thursday, April 25.

Monday, April 29, 2002, Cabinet

The Cabinet met for two hours reviewing a PowerPoint presentation Dr. Linda McFall and Dana Keith prepared for Dr. Shelby Thames to make to the IHL Board on May 6. The presentation dealt with our current budget situation and how the budget cuts with no tuition increase will affect faculty, staff, and particularly students. Suggestions were made on how to improve or make clearer the information provided, and the Cabinet agreed to delete some slides. If there is no tuition increase, the University is looking at a \$4 million-plus cut. Even with a 10-percent increase, the University will have to cut more than a million dollars. With the cuts in our E&G funds and if the IHL Board mandates a 5-percent

reserve, the University would need a 23-percent tuition increase to cover current expenses. It is critical that the IHL Board understands our need for a tuition increase. Dr. Lucas also mentioned the report of the ad hoc committee to review technology on campus. Dr. Lucas plans to talk with Dr. Thames about the sequence of implementing the recommendations and suggest that a committee be appointed to continue oversight of technology operations.

Wednesday, May 1, 2002, Meeting with Dr. Shelby Thames

Pam Posey and I met with Dr. Thames at his request to get acquainted and talk about working together. Dr. Thames pledged his support to the staff and asked that Pam and I convey to the staff that he wants all of us to be positive about the University and to be customer friendly. We are having a difficult time financially, but we hope better days are ahead and employee compensation should improve. He asked us to make an appointment with him to discuss the issues of staff and give ideas about what he as president can do to improve staff morale. He wants suggestions on inexpensive things to do to show appreciation to the staff.

Monday, May 6, 2002, Cabinet and Expanded Cabinet

The Cabinet and Expanded Cabinet will meet this morning at 10:00 rather than yesterday. I also attended the dedication of McCarty Hall, the Faculty/Staff Award and Recognition Ceremony, and the Retirees' Reception, and planned a "thank-you" reception for Dr. Lucas this month.

5.2 President Elect – Pam Posey

I attended each of the presidential candidate interviews and assisted with compiling evaluation responses. I also attended the Board of Trustees meeting in Jackson with Mary (see Mary's report for a detailed summary of this meeting). Mary and I met with Dr. Thames at his request on his first day as President. This was just an "introduction" meeting and we plan to meet again later in the month to discuss ways to help boost staff morale that are low cost to the university. We mentioned that the Staff Council had compiled a list of proposals we felt could help with this issue. We explained that the Executive Committee of Staff Council had presented these proposals to the Vice Presidents earlier in the year. We will share this list of proposals with Dr. Thames at a later date. I also attended the Faculty/Staff Award and Recognition Ceremony and the reception for Dr. Lucas. A special thanks to Kim Busche for attending the Faculty Senate meeting this month. At the Faculty Senate meeting general discussion was held about the length of

classes, dead week, and exam times. The faculty was very open and vocal about all issues discussed.

5.3 Assignment of Action Items – none

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Technology Use and Securities Policy.

There was a motion by Charlene McMillin and second by Mike Giles to endorse the Technology Use and Securities Policy. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Should anyone have any questions concerning this policy or any issues relating to this policy, please contact Isaac Johnston. This policy will be posted on the OTR Web site, and quarterly e-mails will be sent as reminders.

6.2 Staff Council Award Vote

Voting by ballot was taken with the winner to be announced at the June meeting.

7.0 Committee Reports

7.1 Constitution and Bylaws – Kathy Hayman – no report.

7.2 Legislative – Rusty Anderson

We would like to plan a legislative appreciation function in June or early July.

7.3 Salaries and Benefits – Jan Roberts – no report

7.4 University Relations – Susan Sanders/Sam Williams – no report

7.5 Technology and Training – Lin Harper

Staff Council Web Page

The Staff Council Web site has not been updated regularly in the past year due to personnel changes and shortages on the Webteam. Because we see no change in this pattern due to budget shortfalls, the Web site will need to be updated by a staff member. Since I am on the Staff Council for one more year, that task will probably fall to me or someone in my office. We may need to think about what will happen after that and to designate someone responsible for the upkeep of those

pages. The Webteam will provide ongoing training as needed for the designated person.

Title III Grant Update

Center for Education & Learning Technologies (CELT)

Setup for the Center for Education and Learning Technologies is proceeding despite space limitations in McCain. The move of Gunn Materials Center to Cook and IMU's Center move to Gunn space in OMH has been approved, but construction delays in Cook may keep the Center space and personnel located in McCain for some time.

We are rearranging personnel and equipment in MLA 112 (Graphic Services) to accommodate additional equipment and student workers for the Center and its projects. During the first week of intercession, CELT will host a first-ever workshop for first-time online faculty, called "Putting Your Course Online." This 40-hour intensive workshop will train 10 faculty members from various colleges and departments in the elements of online education. By the end of the week, faculty will have an outline of their course, the basic skills to get their course completed, and a built-in support system provided by CELT staff and students. In return for their time, faculty will receive a cash stipend. Eight of the 10 courses will go live online in fall semester; two will go online in spring semester.

Technology Room Upgrades

The Title III grant allows for the renovation of 40 classrooms over the years two-five of the grant, providing instructional technology equipment for highly visible undergraduate programs. A committee chaired by Dr. Maureen Ryan identified those programs and classrooms, and we are now in the process of preparing to upgrade the first 13 of those rooms, 12 on the Hattiesburg campus and one at Gulf Park. Although our schedule is aggressive, we are planning now on having equipment ordered and installed in time for fall semester. Much will depend on the purchasing process, bids, installation time, and other related issues, but we are optimistic.

If there are items or issues that you believe the Technology and Training Committee should be addressing, e-mail me at lin.harper@usm.edu.

7.6 Other Committee Reports

A. Parking Appeals Committee – David Kinsey

Please pay your parking tickets if you have any.

B. Transportation Committee – Polly Odom –no report

C. Campus Master Plan Committee – Rusty Anderson–no report

D. Student Life Center – Kathy Hayman –no report

E. Sexual Assault/Harassment Committee – Joan Brashears

At the last meeting the discussion centered around the fact that there is no funding to accomplish the things that need to be done. The issues that need to be addressed are too few police, too few groundskeepers, and too few lights. If anyone has a suggestion of funding or grant possibilities, please let Joan know.

F. Election Committee – John Hayman

The ballots have been tabulated and the results are as follows:

Clerical: Susan Blackwell, Myra Herndon, Frances Sudduth; Stennis: Keri Hensarling; Skilled Craft: Tommy Dye; Gulf Coast: Sally Donovan. All have agreed to serve. There will be run-off elections in the Service Maintenance and Professional categories.

G. Nominating Committee – Kalin Butirich

We need more nominations. Please get names to the committee: Kalin Butirich, chair, Rusty Anderson, Kathy Hayman.

8.0 New Business

9.0 Announcements

1. We welcome Trisha Wilbanks and Larry McMickle to Staff Council.
2. All officers and committee chairs need to have a written year-end report at the June meeting. Please also put the report on a disk to be given to Kim Busche, our recording secretary.
3. We received a thank-you note from Arlin Steen and his family for flowers sent in memory of his father.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Kim Busche
Recording Secretary
May 7, 2002